

# Spotlight on Aging

VOLUME XXXIII, ISSUE 4

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

April 2021



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By Laura Newland, Director  
D.C. Department of Aging and  
Community Living

Dear Seniors,

Last month marked a year since the life of our community changed dramatically and persistently. This unprecedented time has been difficult for all of us and devastating for so many. We've lost family members, friends and neighbors. We've seen the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our older residents and communities of color.

This past year has changed much of the way we've supported our community including:

Moving all dining site participants to home-delivered meals, and increasing meal delivery capacity to serve 6,600 District seniors! We've delivered more than 2 million meals in the past year.

Launching the brand-new Call & Talk program, currently providing seniors with friendly check-in calls and conversations.

Supporting citywide efforts with critical assignments, including to the Contact Trace Force, Citywide Hotline, and the Board of Elections.

Launching the Seniors Stay Cool program, making sure that income-eligible seniors could stay home and stay cool during heat emergencies, with A/C repairs and replacements. In one month, the program served nearly 100 seniors.

Launching the Senior Technology Pilot Program, providing iPads and technical support to low income, isolated seniors to allow them to stay connected to family, friends, healthcare, information and activities.

Hosting the first-ever Virtual Mayor's Annual Senior Symposium on Channel 16, which included a special meal delivery for more than 800 seniors.

At the same time, we've continued to maintain critical life-sustaining services such as Senior MedExpress, providing transportation to essential medical services for eligible District residents needing to get to their chemotherapy or dialysis appointments in the safest way possible.

Our Safe at Home Program also continued to operate, installing more than 1,000 in-home safety adaptations in FY20 and FY21 to date, while strictly adhering to health and safety guidance from DC Health.

The risks of loneliness and isolation increased for all of us, and we've had to adjust and meet our emotional risks just as much as our public health risks. Like many of you, I've lost dear friends this past year. And I've talked with others over the phone and online as they've told me of their losses and of their grief.

As we think about how to move forward, we know that there's no going back to our pre-COVID lives. But this past year has also shown us that how we show up for each other is limited only by our own imaginations. We have an incredible opportunity to use our collective loss, our collective grief, to create a community that is stronger and more equitable for all of us.

This past year gave us an opportunity to connect with thousands of seniors who weren't connected with us before the public health emergency, and DACL has been better because of it. We've been making new connections every day. And we want to make even more.

If you're lonely and need connection, let us know. If you have an idea of how DACL can better support the community you want to see, we'd love to hear from you. Call us at 202-724-5626. My team and I can't wait to chat soon.

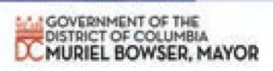
With gratitude,  
Laura

## DACL Partners with the Humane Rescue Alliance

### SENIOR PET CONNECT



with the Department of Aging and Community Living  
and the Humane Rescue Alliance



DACL is excited to partner with the Humane Rescue Alliance to make connections with seniors and some of their pets in foster care. The goal will be to support our efforts in combating isola-

tion by enabling homebound seniors to interact with pets, whether virtually or in-person. If you or a senior you know is interested in participating, please email us at [dacl.communications@dc.gov](mailto:dacl.communications@dc.gov).

## The D.C. Public Library to Host Monthly Talking Book Club Series

Join the D.C. Public Library's Center of Accessibility Talking Book Club! This book club is targeted toward participants who are blind or low vision, but is open to any book lover. The club meets on the second Wednesday of every other month.

The next virtual book club meeting will take place on April 14, from 11 a.m. to noon. For information on how to join the book club, please feel free to contact DCPL by email: [DCPLaccess@dc.gov](mailto:DCPLaccess@dc.gov) or phone: 202-727-2142.

## Join Age-Friendly D.C. for Their Next Task Force Meeting

Age-Friendly D.C. is preparing for the next Age-Friendly D.C. Task Force meeting on May 18, from 1 to 3 p.m., with domain and pillar meet-

ings. To find out how you can participate and get information about additional meetings, please visit [agefriendly.dc.gov](http://agefriendly.dc.gov).

# Call & Talk Success with Ward 8 Senior Denise Smith



#LetsTalk!

CORONAVIRUS.DC.GOV

For the past five years, Ward 8 senior Denise Smith has struggled to find a new kidney, and the public health emergency didn't make it any easier.

"I was on dialysis for five years, and I had some rough times while I was on it," explained Ms. Smith.

But it wasn't until she met Community Outreach Specialist Alice Thompson that she was able to turn those rough times around. During the public health emergency, Alice has communicated frequently with Ms. Smith through DACL's Call & Talk program.

"Times I might feel like I'm stressed out or something, I talk to Ms. Alice. I

feel so much better. Communication is a beautiful thing."

Thanks to Alice and the Call & Talk program, Ms. Smith looked forward to feeling a sense of hope during such an uncertain time. Today, not only has Ms. Smith been able to find a new friend, she's also been fortunate enough to receive a new kidney.

"Ms. Alice, I appreciate her. I never even met her, but I feel like I know her. She's just a lovely person," said an optimistic Ms. Smith. "You might not even know that person, but you don't know how that person might make you feel through the end of that day. You'd be surprised."

# Director Newland Testified at Performance Oversight Hearing



On Monday, March 15, Director Newland represented DACL at our annual Performance Oversight Hearing. To review the Director's full testimony, please visit [dacl.dc.gov](http://dacl.dc.gov).

## Ms. Senior DC Pageant 2021

Are you a DC resident age 60 or older and interested in representing your peers as Ms. Senior DC 2021?

Are you actively involved in your community?

**Consider becoming a contestant in the Ms. Senior DC Pageant 2021!**

Contestants are judged on their:

- Personal Interview
- Philosophy of Life
- Talent Presentation
- Evening Gown Presentation

The winner will represent the District and compete in the Ms. Senior America Pageant in October 2021.

For more information on how to apply visit:

[www.dacl.dc.gov](http://www.dacl.dc.gov)  
 call DACL at 202-724-5626  
 email [dacl.communications@dc.gov](mailto:dacl.communications@dc.gov)

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
 DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

# Spotlight on Aging

Spotlight on Aging is published by the Information Office of the D.C.

Department of Aging and Community Living for D.C. senior residents.

Advertising contained in the *Beacon* is not endorsed by the D.C.

Department of Aging and Community Living or by the publisher.

**Director**

Laura Newland

**Editor**

DACL External Affairs

**Photographer**

Richard Williams

500 K St. N.E.,  
 Washington, D.C. 20002

(202) 724-5626 | [www.dacl.dc.gov](http://www.dacl.dc.gov)

# Vacancies on D.C. Commission on Aging

Are you interested in serving your community as an aging advocate? The District of Columbia Commission on Aging is a citizen's advisory group to the Mayor, Council of the District of Columbia, Department of Office Aging and Community Living, and the general public on the needs and concerns of older Washingtonians. The Commissioners serve as advocates on behalf of the District's more than 120,000 seniors, and ac-

complish their responsibilities through outreach to individuals and institutions, as well as to groups and governments.

The Commission's 15 members are appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Council of the District of Columbia.

To apply to become a member, visit the Mayor's Office of Talents and Appointments website: <http://motaboard.theresumator.com>.